

Message Text

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SUBJ: SECURITY ASSISTANCE: SRI LANKA

REF: STATE 167901

1. US INTERESTS SERVED BY SECURITY ASSISTANCE RELATIONSHIP
AND SECURITY ASSISTANCE OBJECTIVES
U.S. INTERESTS IN SRI LANKA ARE RELATED TO OUR INTEREST IN
THE INDIAN OCEAN OF PROMOTING STABILITY IN THE LITTORAL STATES.
SRI LANKA'S ARMED FORCES PLAY A KEY ROLE IN ENSURING DOMESTIC
STABILITY.

2. SRI LANKA'S PERCEPTION OF EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL THREATS
SRI LANKA PERCEIVES NO EXTERNAL ENEMIES. HOWEVER, IT VIEWS
EVENTS IN NEIGHBORING AND REGIONAL COUNTRIES WITH AN EYE TO
POTENTIAL DANGERS. THE GOVERNMENT'S MAIN CONCERN IS WITH
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POSSIBLE INTERNAL THREATS, EITHER COMMUNAL OR COMMUNIST IN-
SPIRED.

3. EMBASSY'S PERCEPTION OF THREAT
WE PERCEIVE NO DIRECT THREATS TO SRI LANKA. WHILE THERE IS
A POSSIBILITY OF RENEWED VIOLENCE IN THIS COMMUNALLY DIVIDED
SOCIETY, THERE IS LITTLE EVIDENCE THAT THE PRINCIPAL MINORITY,

THE TAMILS, ARE CAPABLE OF MOUNTING A SUSTAINED INSURGENCY, ALTHOUGH A SMALL GROUP OF TAMILS CALLS FOR ONE. THERE HAVE BEEN REPORTS OF FOREIGN ASSISTANCE TO THE TAMILS, BUT THESE HAVE NOT BEEN FULLY SUBSTANTIATED.

4. TYPE OF MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT SUITED TO REQUIREMENTS AND THREAT

SRI LANKA'S MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT IS STRUCTURED TO ASSIST IN INTERNAL SECURITY. THE LARGEST FORCE IS THE ARMY BECAUSE AN INSURGENCY WOULD BE A LAND OPERATION WITHOUT AIR OR NAVAL SUPPORT. THE NAVY IS PRINCIPALLY INVOLVED IN ANTI-SMUGGLING, ANTI-ILLCIT IMMIGRATION, AND GENERAL COASTAL PATROL AND RESCUE OPERATIONS. ROLE OF THE AIR FORCE IS INLAND COASTAL PATROL AND LOGISTICAL SUPPORT.

5. RELATION OF ARMED FORCES TO U.S. INTERESTS AND ALTERNATIVES
SRI LANKA'S ARMED FORCES PLAY A MAJOR ROLE IN ENSURING STABILITY IN THE COUNTRY. THE PRESENT FORCE STRUCTURE MEETS SRI LANKA'S SECURITY REQUIREMENTS BUT NEEDS DEVELOPMENT OF ITS MANAGEMENT CAPABILITIES, PARTICULARLY AT THE MIDDLE LEVEL, AND A MODERATE UPDATING OF EQUIPMENT.

6. EFFECTS ON ECONOMY OF DEFENSE SPENDING

SRI LANKA'S DEFENSE SPENDING IS ONLY A SMALL PART OF THE NATIONAL BUDGET. FOR FY 78 ESTIMATED DEFENSE EXPENDITURES FOR MILITARY AND POLICE ARE \$24 MILLION, APPROXIMATELY 3.7
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PERCENT OF THE TOTAL BUDGET AND 1.1 PERCENT OF GNP. NO FIGURES ARE AVAILABLE FOR MILITARY IMPORTS, BUT THEY ARE BELIEVED TO BE A MINISCULE PART OF OVERALL IMPORTS. SRI LANKA'S FOREIGN EXCHANGE POSITION HAS BEEN IMPROVING, AND SRI LANKA HAS A GOOD DEBT SERVICE RECORD.

7. ARMS CONTROL IMPACT

SUPPORTING ASSISTANCE FOR SRI LANKA HAS NO ARMS CONTROL IMPACT AND NO EFFECT ON REGIONAL STABILITY. TRAINING TO BE PROVIDED BY THE U.S. IS FOR UPGRADING MID LEVEL MANAGEMENT.

8. HUMAN RIGHTS

SRI LANKA HAS AN ENVIABLE REPUTATION ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND IS RATED ONE OF THE 42 FREE COUNTRIES OF THE WORLD BY FREEDOM HOUSE. IN 1977 THE NEW GOVERNMENT ABOLISHED THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE COMMISSIONS (CJC) ACT WHICH ALLOWED FOR TRIAL AND SENTENCING OUTSIDE OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL JUDICIAL SYSTEM. THE CJC HAD BEEN PASSED BY THE PREVIOUS GOVERNMENT TO HANDLE PRIMARILY OFFENSES ARISING OUT OF THE 1971 INSURRECTION. ALL PERSONS WHO WERE BEING HELD UNDER THE CJC WERE RELEASED IN OCTOBER 1977. SRI LANKA'S ARMED FORCES ARE GENERALLY APOLITICAL AND PROVISION OF TRAINING IN THE U.S. UNDER IMET WOULD PROBABLY

CONTRIBUTE TO KEEPING THEM THAT WAY. TRAINING IN THE U.S. WOULD ALSO ENHANCE MILITARY AWARENESS OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND ITS IMPORTANCE IN U.S. BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES.

9. ECONOMIC AND MILITARY ASSISTANCE FROM OTHER SOURCES
IN 1977 SRI LANKA RECEIVED ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE FROM 49 COUNTRIES AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS. TOTAL AID WAS \$210 MILLION, INCLUDING \$45 MILLION FROM THE U.S. MILITARY ASSISTANCE FROM NON-U.S. SOURCES IS PRIMARILY FROM THE UK, PRC, USSR, INDIA, AND PAKISTAN AND IS MAINLY FOR TRAINING AND FOR SPARE PARTS TO MAINTAIN PREVIOUSLY ACQUIRED EQUIPMENT.

10. COUNTRY PROGGAM RECOMMENDATIONS:
LEVEL 1, (MINIMAL LEVEL): IMET ONLY - \$10,000. THE S LEVEL
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PROGRAM WOULD PROBABLY BE PERCEIVED BY GSL AS LACK OF US INTEREST AND CONCERN. IT WOULD PROVIDE ONLY FOR ORIENTATION TRIPS AND SEMINAR TYPE TRAINING FOR SERVICE HEADS OR DEPUTIES.

11. LEVEL 2, (INTERMEDIATE LEVEL): IMET ONLY - \$25,000.
THIS LEVEL WOULD PROVIDE BOTH MINIMUM RISK AND BENEFIT. IN ADDITION TO PROGRAMS OF LEVEL 1, IT WOULD ALLOW FOR A MINIMUM AMOUNT OF STAFF TRAINING FOR MID-GRADE OFFICERS.

12. LEVEL 3 (CURRENT LEVEL): IMET ONLY - \$55,000. THIS LEVEL ASSURES GSL OF CONTINUED U.S. INTEREST AND PROVIDES NEEDED TRAINING AT ACCEPTABLE LEVEL. TRAINING OF MID-GRADE OFFICERS AND SENIOR ENLISTED MEN IN MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP WILL INCREASE MILITARY PROFESSIONALISM AND EFFECTIVENESS, THEREBY CONTRIBUTING TO INTERNAL SECURITY AND STABILITY IN SUPPORT OF U.S. GOALS IN INDIAN OCEAN.

13. INCREMENTAL LEVEL: IMET \$100,000. THIS LEVEL WOULD ALLOW FOR QUALITATIVE INCREASE OF DEFENSE CAPABILITIES AND WOULD INVOLVE NO INCREASED RISK.

14. BUDGET LEVEL REQUIREMENTS FOR OUR IMET PROGRAM WILL REMAIN AT PRESENT LEVEL \$50,000 TO \$60,000 ANNUALLY THROUGH FY 82.
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